

Executive Summary

Criminal Justice in Washington State was developed and written as a project of Washington State's Byrne Grant Committee. Grant #2003-DB-BX-0243, awarded to the State of Washington by the Bureau of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, supports Byrne grant programs and activities.

The Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) is the state's administrative agency for the Byrne Grant in Washington State.

There is no centralized state administration of criminal justice programs in Washington State. However, the state, federal and local agencies that make up Washington's criminal justice system are linked by a public policy-making structure that creates the common laws and procedures that define the criminal justice system and its operation. This report provides a comprehensive description of the current structure and operation of that system.

The Byrne Grant Committee is made up of criminal justice and victim advocacy professionals who advise the CTED on best use for Byrne grant funds by:

- Developing a statewide strategy for use of Byrne Grant funds which includes an assessment of drug and violent crime problems in the state, analysis of the effectiveness of current efforts, and a plan of action for addressing the problems;
- Providing advice and counsel regarding the development and administration of the Byrne Program; and
- Making funding recommendations to CTED for appropriate programs to reduce violence and drug-related crimes in Washington State.

In Washington State, Byrne grant funding currently supports a variety of strategies to reduce drug and violent crime, including multi-jurisdictional narcotics taskforces, youth violence prevention, the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse, drug courts, criminal history records, training for defenders, domestic violence legal advocacy, crime victims' advocacy, and tribal law enforcement.

The primary purpose of this report is to provide a full description of the operation of Washington's criminal justice system to provide a foundation for future planning to assess criminal justice system needs and to develop recommendations for public policy action to reduce the impact of drug and violent crime.

This report includes descriptions of the key components of Washington's criminal justice system including services to Offenders and Victims, Courts, Defenders, Prosecutors, Corrections, and the financing of criminal justice system.

Readers of the report will discover some interesting facts about drugs and violent crime in Washington State, including the following:

- For every 100 crimes reported in Washington State, there are 29 arrests, which will result in six felony convictions.
- Washington Institute for Public Policy research showed a drop of two to four percent in crime for every 10 percent increase in incarceration between 1980 and 2001.
- Between 1980 and 2000 the state's population increased by 42 percent. The number of felony sentences increased by 150 percent over the same time period.

- One out of every 100 males ages 18 to 39 is incarcerated in a Department of Corrections facility. Washington is the only state that uses determinate sentencing for juveniles and was one of the first states to adopt determinate sentencing for adults.
- The Department of Corrections supervises 16,000 offenders in correctional facilities and oversees an average of 65,000 felony offenders completing sentences in the community.
- On an average day in 2001, Washington's juvenile justice system oversaw 13,646 youth. Of those, 11,604 were supervised at the local level.
- Between July 2001 and June 2002 domestic violence shelters in Washington State provided services to 25,574 adults and children. Another 34,813 people seeking shelter services were turned away because of lack of space.
- The national average for the number of sworn law enforcement officers is 157 per 100,000 residents. Washington State ranks 48th among all states for the number of local law enforcement officers, averaging 98 per 100,000 residents.
- In 1999, expenditures for law and justice costs by Washington's state and local governments was \$418 per capita, ranking 22nd in comparison with other states. The national average is \$442.
- Washington State ranks last among all states in the funding provided for the state's court system. Local governments provide 85 percent of the funding dedicated to courts in Washington.